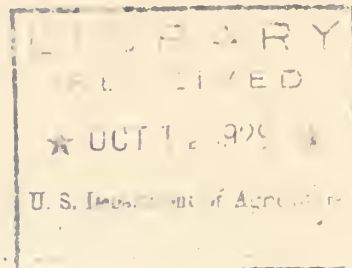


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OUR WOOD SUPPLY IN 1950

A radio talk by Major R. Y. Stuart, Chief, U. S. Forest Service, delivered through WRC and 31 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Tuesday, October 1, 1929 at 1:30 p.m.

Friends of the Radio Audience:

Listeners on the radio have probably been hearing a popular song lately which tells us in a rather doleful sort of way that we should look down the road before we travel on. I am not well enough up on the late music to know just why that warning is given us in such mournful tones, but it seems to me that the advice will serve pretty well as a general precept.

We of the United States Forest Service have been looking ahead. Our big job is the promotion of the best use of forest lands and forest products throughout the United States so as to assure abundant forests and abundant timber. It is a vitally necessary job because in a large measure the future welfare of the whole country depends ^{upon trees and} lots of them. Our basic industries, both agricultural and manufacturing, must have a continuous supply of wood. Our water supply is dependent upon the protection of forest cover on mountain watersheds.

More than two thousand years ago, that wise old Greek philosopher, Plato, said that "the consequence of deforestation is the sickening of a country." We have examples before us right now of the truth of that statement. Forests are vitally necessary to the economic and social health of the nation.

The forests of the United States are now being drawn on at the rate of about 25 billion cubic feet of wood each year. From the latest data available they are being cut or burned much faster than they are being grown. We are now tapping our last remaining big stands of virgin timber. That makes it look bad for 1950, doesn't it?

But the fact remains that we have sufficient lands suitable only for forest growth to raise the timber we will need. To do this forest land must be kept at work. Lands that have once produced timber can produce it again if they are protected from fire, and handled so as to assure a continuous crop.

What our wood supply will be in 1950 and thereafter depends largely upon what we do today. The lands from which our timber is cut should be left productive. Our production should keep constant pace with our needs. The young second growth of today--even the non-productive cut-over and burned-over lands of today--will increasingly be the source of our wood supply in the future. All forest lands must be protected and developed. There is need right now for very rapid extension and improvement of protection from fire both on public and privately owned forest lands. There is need for rapid improvement of logging methods to prevent deforestation. There is need for a much larger program

of planting on lands that will not come back to forest growth naturally. There is need for much more knowledge of forestry - for research to find out how we can make trees grow better and faster at less cost, how we can keep forest fires down to the irreducible minimum, how we can obtain better utilization of the trees cut.

Now, just how does this big national forest problem concern the every day farmer?

To begin with, the farmers of the country in the aggregate own approximately one-fourth of all the forest land in the country. East of the Mississippi especially, it might be said that the farmers hold in their hands the future of our wood supply. Right now, the value of the products taken from farm woodlands reaches a huge total; in some sections it exceeds in value any other one farm crop. But it is a sad fact that a large proportion of the 127,000,000 acres of farm woodlands are poorly cared for--are not producing anywhere near what they can and should.

The principles of forestry are just as applicable to the small farm woods as they are to a million acre tract of timber; forestry calls simply for complete fire protection, for replanting the bare spots, culling out the "weed" trees and favoring the valuable ones, harvesting only ripe or defective or over-crowded trees, and thus leaving plenty of thrifty growing timber, so that successive crops can be cut. In return it gives increased land values, wood and timber for farm needs, and frequently a cash crop for which there is a standing market. It also protects the other crop lands by checking erosion and gullying and by conserving moisture.

But the forest problem touches the farmer very closely in a much larger way. He is dependent upon a continuing supply of wood at low cost for his houses and barns and other farm structures, for his farm implements, his posts and poles, and for the hundreds of other things where wood enters into the farm operations. He is dependent upon the forest protection of the watersheds for his water supply. Every irrigation project must be backed up by watershed protection. One of the big jobs in the administration of the western national forests is the maintenance and improvement of these watersheds upon which practically the entire west is dependent. Bare watersheds also add to the flood menace. The auxiliary use of the national forests for grazing is a boon to many a livestock owner and the ranges must be used and protected like the forest so that they will yield a continuing supply of forage.

One of the most important elements of our agricultural problem is the proper use of land. In vast regions farm lands are surrounded by great areas of depleted or denuded forest lands which are unproductive, employ little or no labor, create no industry, pay little or no taxes, and cannot be successfully farmed. These lands, if withheld from unwise agricultural development and if reforested by public or private effort, will add a vast, permanent, profitable resource to our land wealth.

Our Secretary of Agriculture recently said; "Reforestation should not be considered solely from the standpoint of timber supply. Great social and recreational values are involved. The waste of national resources forms an important element. Flood control is another. It is worthy of thought whether the re-

forestation of every capable acre of publicly owned land, and the purchase and forestation of many privately owned submarginal lands upon our watersheds would not be a sound and practicable measure of national economy."

